

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

August 17, 2022

Michael S. Regan
Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Regan,

We were shocked to learn that the \$15 billion in new investment Congress approved in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill last year to remove lead from drinking water systems nationwide is being allocated without adequate consideration for the quantity of lead service lines (LSL) in each state. This decision risks the health of families and children across the country and is entirely contrary to the intent of Congress in passing the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill.

According to a report from the Natural Resources Defense Council, New Jersey will receive only \$138 per LSL, the second lowest amount of investment in the entire nation, while Nevada will receive \$6,303 per LSL, Alaska will receive \$7,441 per LSL, and Hawaii will receive an unbelievable \$10,098 per LSL.¹ This absurd disparity could result in many of the most at-risk communities being left out of mitigation efforts entirely, and it is completely unacceptable. It is hard to imagine the process that led to this allocation, but clearly it was faulty and must be wholly reworked to ensure that the funds reach the recipients that Congress intended.

Lead is a poison that can affect almost every organ and system in the human body, often irreversibly. We know that exposure to lead can have a severe impact on our children, stunting development, causing learning disabilities, hearing loss, seizures, and irreversible harm to brain development, the nervous system, and vital organs.

Even at very low levels once considered safe, lead can cause serious, irreversible damage to young, developing brains and the nervous systems of babies and young children. Lead can decrease a child's cognitive capacity, cause behavioral problems, and limit the ability to concentrate—all of which make it harder for our children to achieve their dreams.

That is why Congress passed the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill with vital lead remediation provisions. Distributing these critical resources without consideration for the risk to health is unconscionable and this disastrous decision must be fixed expeditiously. In July, New Jersey passed into law a suite of bills to address lead issues and require all LSLs to be replaced within 10 years.² This is an important step forward, but according to New Jersey Future, the cost of LSL replacements average about \$6,600.³

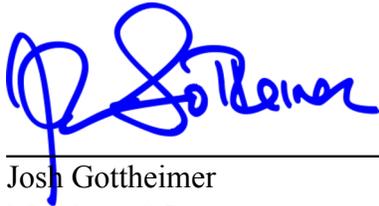
¹ <https://www.nrdc.org/experts/cyndi-roper/lead-pipe-funding-shortchanges-states-most-lead-water-pipes>

² <https://nj.gov/governor/news/news/562021/approved/20210722a.shtml>

³ <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2021/04/nj-lead-service-lines-2-3-billion-overhaul-cost-but-banking-president-biden-infrastructure-plan-at-least-1-billion-newark-successful-replacement-template/>

We demand that you immediately reconsider these allocations and send these funds where they are needed most. We also ask that you explain how this inexplicable decision was made and how your agency plans to avoid repeating this outcome.

Sincerely,



Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress



Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress



Donald Norcross
Member of Congress



Mikie Sherrill
Member of Congress



Tom Malinowski
Member of Congress